

purpose. The chief inquisitor then descended from the amphitheater, dressed in his cope, and having a miter on his head. After having bowed to the altar, he advanced towards the king's balcony, and went up to it, attended by some of his officers, carrying a cross and the Gospels... The Mass was begun about twelve at noon, and did not end until nine in the evening, being protracted by a proclamation of the sentences of the several criminals, which were already separately rehearsed aloud one after the other."⁹¹

The key point in the preceding quote is not that the heretics were burned alive (as is well known), but rather that the celebration of High Mass, the participation in the worship of the Eucharistic Mystery, was the central event in their death sentence.

Without dwelling unnecessarily on the torturous methods of examination and execution, then, it is enough to say that the Eucharist was indeed central to the purpose and procedure of the Inquisitions. Central also to the administration of the Tribunals was the confiscation of goods from the accused, as the inquisition against the Waldenses (above, pg. 58) clearly demonstrates. These confiscated goods, if of any value, were used to maintain the tremendous overhead expenses of operating the Tribunals.⁹² By confiscating finances and properties, the tribunals also assured that whoever was guilty of failing to adore the Eucharist was also unable to participate in any financial exchange with his business partners, and of course was rendered unable to purchase basic necessities to sustain a family. For all purposes, an accused heretic was denied the ability to buy or sell goods, services and properties if he refused to acknowledge and worship the True Physical Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist:

"The sentence of the Inquisition imposed a variety of fines and personal penalties, such as entire or partial confiscation; perpetual, or a limited period of imprisonment; exile, or transportation; infamy, and the loss of employments, honours, and dignities."⁹³

⁹¹ Fox, pg. 62. Italics in original

⁹² Roth, Cecil, M.A., Ph.D., Oxon., *The Spanish Inquisition*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., ©1964) pg. 37

⁹³ Llorente, pg. 29

"A defence in the Inquisition is of little use to the prisoner, for a suspicion only is deemed sufficient cause for condemnation, and the greater his wealth the greater his danger."⁹⁴

"At a further *auto [da fé]* of December 22, 1560, there were fourteen relaxations^{*} in person and three in effigy... Among the other persons relaxed were two Englishmen, named Brooks and Burton respectively. The latter was a ship's captain. All the merchandise on board his vessel was forfeited, and, when another Englishman, named Frampton, was sent out to endeavour to recover the property he not only failed in his mission, but fell into the hands of the Inquisition. As the result of severe torture he promised to embrace Roman Catholicism."⁹⁵

We need not dwell overly long on the fact that the Inquisitors imposed financial sanctions on, and then confiscated the properties of, those who refused to honor the Eucharist. It is sufficient to say that the interrogating official of the Tribunal was called "the procurator-fiscal,"⁹⁶ a word which necessarily implies financial seizure and intimidation. The central theme of the Inquisitions was the Eucharist, and the punishments consistently were fiscal and economic restrictions, and death by various means for those who refused to bow to the bread of the altar. This was so well known by the general populace of the time that the mere mention of the Inquisitors, or the Tribunals over which they presided, struck fear into the hearts of the nobility and common people alike. The Inquisitors had become so thorough in their dealings that they gained for the Eucharist a certain respect and fear among the people--a respect that would have otherwise been reserved for some of history's most infamous dictators:

⁹⁴ Fox, pg. 61

^{*} Relaxation is a euphemism for 'extermination.' The word was used commonly to describe the death of an impenitent heretic and should not be taken to mean 'acquittal,' which is what 'relaxation' would normally seem to imply

⁹⁵ Turberville, Arthur Stanley, *The Spanish Inquisition*, (Oxford University Press: Archon Books, ©1932) pg. 139. Brackets added for clarity

⁹⁶ Llorente, pp. 64-5